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BOOK REVIEWS



IN CHARGE OF

M. E. CAMERON, R.N.

THE HEALTHFUL ART OF DANCING. By Luther H. Gulick, M.D.
Doubleday, Page & Company, New York.

Dr. Gulick announces the aim of his book to be that of presenting "criteria and standards regarding the place of folk-dancing in every-day American life, in the schools, on the playground, and in the house;" also "to interpret the movement, to show that which is good and why it is good, and to indicate, for the purpose of introducing this element into American life, practical measures that experience has proved successful."

The author, as shown in his earlier books, is urgent for the importance of the optimistic point of view, for the cultivation of the sane and the wholesome, and advises judicious exercise and the expression of happy feeling of joyousness and satisfaction in living. His present work takes up the constructive treatment which shall produce these results, and to this end argues for dancing or rather of folk-dancing. For society dancing he has little to say; the subject of his book is the dance games and the work done in the public schools and by the Playgrounds Association of America.

Like Zangwill, Dr. Gulick sees in America the vast "melting pot" which by fusion of the peoples of all the earth is to produce the nation of the future, and he suggests the richness and variety of the folk dances in the time to come if each nation foster and preserve its primitive dances. In the meantime and for present use he finds in the folk-dances, particularly those of Sweden and Russia, the most popular form of gymnastic exercise for the young. He gives such an attractive glimpse of the art as practised in the public schools that one is tempted to quote indefinitely. One paragraph will have to suffice.

"One has to see them to get an idea of the kind of spell they (the dances) possess for the children; how every muscle responds accurately and eagerly to the exhilarating well cadenced rhythm of the music; how the dancers move back and forth, gliding, hopping, tripping, crossing and recrossing, now fast, now slow, according to some intricate scheme at which an outsider can only stare in wonder; with how much zest and

abandon all the mimicry of the Swedish and Russian folk-dances is entered into—the slaps on the face (that do not slap), the quaint cajolery, the dignified ceremoniousness, the whole gamut of mimic social life. The music, too, is always appropriate. It is the music that has grown up with **the dance**, and belongs to it—the strange, harmonious and peculiar rhythm of Slavic chardos; the spirited, sharply accented air with the bagpipe's drone imitated in the bass, of the Highland Fling."

The book contains reports from the playground associations and from teachers in the public schools testifying to the popularity and the good results of the introduction of folk-dancing into recreation centres in crowded cities where space is at a premium.

THE CONQUEST OF THE NERVES. By I. W. Courteney, M.D. Price \$1.25. The Macmillan Company, New York.

Dr. Courteney's book is a protest against the tremendous exodus of people outside of the field of medicine in search of cures for physical ills. He attributes this in some measure to ignorance and regrets the lack of even rudimentary knowledge of the human body and its functions prevailing among otherwise intelligent and enlightened people; and also to a proneness to run after quackery. He disputes the idea that mind is the absolute master of the body; and taking up in order the methods pursued by the Christian Science, Emmanuel, and New Thought forms of therapy, demonstrates briefly but effectively the great importance of the rôle of self in the mental and spiritual healing, the great use made of the attributes, faith, prayer and optimism. A chapter on charlatantry in general leaves us rather humiliated at the superstitions which still flourish in good society, and at the childish credulity displayed by people in general as evidenced by enormous sales of patent medicines, not to mention the thousand and one devices as rings, belts, lockets and contrivances, electrical and other, which find a ready market.

Proceeding to the field of legitimate medicine the author proceeds to treat of functional nervous disorder—the subject of organic disease in this connection being classed as a different condition and not entered upon.

As to the causes of functional nervous disorder they are ranged under two heads—the predisposing and the direct; the most prominent of the former is stated to be hereditary. Education and training are also reckoned as predisposing factors. Direct cause of functional nervous disorder is, in the opinion of Dr. Courteney, more rare than is generally supposed—but if direct cause exists independent of predisposition, it is to be found in worry—add to worry bad dietetic and hygienic conditions